

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA  
HARRISONBURG DIVISION**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**v.**

**Criminal No. 5:23-cr-02**

**BRANDON BETTER and  
EDDIE REEVES JR.,  
Defendants**

*In violation of:*  
18 U.S.C. §§ 371, 922(a)(6), 924(a)(1)(A)  
and 924(a)(2)

**INDICTMENT**

The Grand Jury charges that:

**Introduction**

At all times relevant to this Indictment:

1. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (“ATF”) was an agency within the Department of Justice, which was part of the Executive Branch of the Government of the United States. As part of its lawful functions, the ATF was responsible for enforcing federal firearms laws and preventing illegal firearms trafficking. The ATF issued licenses to firearms dealers and regulations governing the sale and distribution of firearms and ammunition.

2. Federal law prohibited certain categories of individuals, such as individuals convicted of a crime punishable by a term of imprisonment exceeding one year, from possessing firearms. For this reason, licensed dealers were required to obtain information about the identity of individuals who sought to purchase firearms. Licensed dealers were required to have each individual seeking to purchase a firearm complete an ATF Form 4473, called a Firearms Transaction Record. The Form 4473 required the potential firearms purchaser to provide his or her name, address, and other identifying information. The purchaser was also required to present a valid government-issued photo identification to the licensed dealer.

3. The Form 4473 also required the potential firearms purchaser to answer a series of questions to determine whether the purchase was permitted under federal law. One of the questions stated, “Are you the actual transferee/buyer of the firearm(s) listed on this form. . .? Warning: You are not the actual transferee/buyer if you are acquiring the firearm(s) on behalf of another person. If you are not the actual transferee/buyer, the licensee cannot transfer the firearm(s) to you.” Several other questions asked the purchaser to provide information to be used to determine whether the purchaser was prohibited under federal law from receiving a firearm.

4. Once a purchaser completed the Form 4473, the licensed dealer was required to submit the purchaser’s identifying information to a representative of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (“NICS”), who would inform the licensed dealer whether the purchaser was permitted to receive the firearm.

5. Licensed dealers were required to retain all completed Forms 4473 in their permanent records.

**COUNT ONE**  
**18 U.S.C. § 371**

***Conspiracy to Commit Offense Against and Defraud the United States***

6. The allegations in the proceeding paragraphs are repeated and incorporated by reference.

7. From at least March 2021, the exact date being unknown, and continuing until about June 25, 2021, in the Western District of Virginia and elsewhere, defendants BRANDON BETTER and EDDIE REEVES JR. unlawfully conspired with each other and with individuals known and unknown to the grand jury to:

- a. Defraud the United States by deceitful and dishonest means by impeding and obstructing the lawful government functions of the ATF in enforcing federal firearms laws and preventing illegal firearms trafficking;
- b. Knowingly make and aid and abet the making of false and fictitious statements to licensed dealers, which statements were intended and likely to deceive the licensed dealers as to a fact material to the lawfulness the sale of firearms under chapter 44 of Title 18, which is an offense against the United States in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(a)(6); and
- c. Knowingly cause false representations to be made with respect to information required to be kept in the records of a dealer, licensed under Chapter 44 of Title 18, United States Code, which is an offense against the United States in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(a)(1)(A).

**Overt Acts**

- 8. In furtherance of the conspiracy and to accomplish its unlawful objectives, the following overt acts, among others, were committed in the Western District of Virginia:
  - a. BETTER falsely represented on ATF Forms 4473 that he was the actual buyer of the firearms listed in Counts Two through Thirty-Three, when in fact he was not the actual buyer.
  - b. The offenses described in Counts Two through Thirty-Three of this Indictment are hereby incorporated by referenced and alleged as overt acts in furtherance of the conspiracy.
- 9. All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371.

**COUNTS TWO THROUGH SIX**  
**18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(6)**  
***False Statement During Firearms Purchase***

10. On or about the following dates, in the Western District of Virginia, defendant BRANDON BETTER, in connection with the acquisition of the following firearms from Rural King and Middletown Firearms, licensed dealers within the meaning of Chapter 44, Title 18, United States Code, knowingly made and aided and abetted the making of false and fictitious statements to the licensed dealers, which statements were intended and likely to deceive the licensed dealers as to a fact material to the lawfulness of the sale of the firearms under chapter 44 of Title 18. Specifically, BETTER executed Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Forms 4473 to the effect that that he was the actual buyer of the firearm(s) indicated on the Forms 4473, when in fact as the defendant then knew, BETTER was not the actual buyer of the firearm(s).

<b><u>Count</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Firearm(s)</u></b>	<b><u>FFL</u></b>
TWO	March 20, 2021	Ruger Security-0 9mm Pistol	Rural King
THREE	April 20, 2021	Taurus PT111 G2A 9mm Pistol	Rural King
FOUR	April 28, 2021	Taurus G3C 9x19 caliber Pistol Taurus PT111 G2A 9mm Pistol	Rural King
FIVE	May 20, 2021	Glock 48 9x19 caliber Pistol Glock G43X 9mm Pistol	Middletown Firearms
SIX	May 20, 2021	Taurus G3 9x19 caliber Pistol Taurus G3C 9x19 caliber Pistol	Rural King

11. All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(a)(6) and 924(a)(2).

**COUNTS SEVEN THROUGH SEVENTEEN**  
**18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(6)**  
***False Statement During Firearms Purchase***

12. On or about the following dates, in the Western District of Virginia, defendants BRANDON BETTER and EDDIE REEVES JR., in connection with the acquisition of the

following firearms from Rural King and Middletown Firearms, licensed dealers within the meaning of Chapter 44, Title 18, United States Code, knowingly made and aided and abetted the making of false and fictitious statements to the licensed dealers, which statements were intended and likely to deceive the licensed dealers as to a fact material to the lawfulness of the sale of the firearms under chapter 44 of Title 18. Specifically, BETTER executed Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Forms 4473 to the effect that that he was the actual buyer of the firearm(s) indicated on the Forms 4473, when in fact as the defendants then knew, BETTER was not the actual buyer of the firearm(s).

<b><u>Count</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Firearm(s)</u></b>	<b><u>FFL</u></b>
SEVEN	May 8, 2021	Glock G22 Gen4 .40 caliber Pistol	Middletown Firearms
EIGHT	May 8, 2021	Taurus G3C 9x19 caliber Pistol Taurus PT111 G2A 9mm Pistol	Rural King
NINE	May 11, 2021	FNH 503 M&P 9mm Pistol S&W Shield 9mm Pistol	Middletown Firearms
TEN	May 12, 2021	Glock 43 9x19 caliber Pistol	Middletown Firearms
ELEVEN	May 12, 2021	Taurus PT111 G2A 9mm Pistol	Rural King
TWELVE	May 16, 2021	Taurus PT111 G2A 9mm Pistol Taurus PT111 G2A 9mm Pistol Glock 42 .380 caliber Pistol Glock 42 .380 caliber Pistol	Rural King
THIRTEEN	May 17, 2021	Glock 42 .380 caliber Pistol Glock G48 9mm Pistol	Middletown Firearms
FOURTEEN	May 24, 2021	Anderson AM-15 300 .300 caliber Rifle	Middletown Firearms
FIFTEEN	May 26, 2021	Taurus PT111 G2A 9mm Pistol	Rural King
SIXTEEN	May 26, 2021	Glock 22Gen5 .40 caliber Pistol	Middletown Firearms
SEVENTEEN	June 25, 2021	SCCY CPX-2 9mm Pistol Ruger EC9s 9mm Pistol	Rural King

13. All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(a)(6) and 924(a)(2).

**COUNTS EIGHTEEN THROUGH TWENTY-TWO****18 U.S.C. § 924(a)(1)(A)*****False Statement on Firearms Records***

14. On or about the following dates, in the Western District of Virginia, defendants BRANDON BETTER knowingly made and aided and abetted the making of false statements and representations to Rural King and Middletown Firearms, persons licensed under the provisions of Chapter 44 of Title 18, United States Code, with respect to information required by the provisions of Chapter 44 of Title 18, United States Code, to be kept in their records. Specifically, BETTER executed Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Forms 4473 to the effect that that he was the actual buyer of the firearm(s) indicated on the Forms 4473, when in fact as the defendant then knew, he was not the actual buyer of the firearm(s).

<b><u>Count</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Firearm(s)</u></b>	<b><u>FFL</u></b>
EIGHTEEN	March 20, 2021	Ruger Security-0 9mm Pistol	Rural King
NINETEEN	April 20, 2021	Taurus PT111 G2A 9mm Pistol	Rural King
TWENTY	April 28, 2021	Taurus G3C 9x19 caliber Pistol Taurus PT111 G2A 9mm Pistol	Rural King
TWENTY-ONE	May 20, 2021	Glock 48 9x19 caliber Pistol Glock G43X 9mm Pistol	Middletown Firearms
TWENTY-TWO	May 20, 2021	Taurus G3 9x19 caliber Pistol Taurus G3C 9x19 caliber Pistol	Rural King

15. All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(a)(1)(A).

**COUNTS TWENTY-THREE THROUGH THIRTY-THREE****18 U.S.C. § 924(a)(1)(A)*****False Statement on Firearms Records***

16. On or about the following dates, in the Western District of Virginia, defendants BRANDON BETTER and EDDIE REEVES JR., knowingly made and aided and abetted the making of false statements and representations to Rural King and Middletown Firearms, persons licensed under the provisions of Chapter 44 of Title 18, United States Code, with respect to information required by the provisions of Chapter 44 of Title 18, United States Code, to be kept in

their records. Specifically, BETTER executed Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Forms 4473 to the effect that that he was the actual buyer of the firearm(s) indicated on the Forms 4473, when in fact as the defendants then knew, BETTER was not the actual buyer of the firearm(s).

<u>Count</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Firearm(s)</u>	<u>FFL</u>
TWENTY-THREE	May 8, 2021	Glock G22 Gen4 .40 caliber Pistol	Middletown Firearms
TWENTY-FOUR	May 8, 2021	Taurus G3C 9x19 caliber Pistol Taurus PT111 G2A 9mm Pistol	Rural King
TWENTY-FIVE	May 11, 2021	FNH 503 M&P 9mm Pistol S&W Shield 9mm Pistol	Middletown Firearms
TWENTY-SIX	May 12, 2021	Glock 43 9x19 caliber Pistol	Middletown Firearms
TWENTY-SEVEN	May 12, 2021	Taurus PT111 G2A 9mm Pistol	Rural King
TWENTY-EIGHT	May 16, 2021	Taurus PT111 G2A 9mm Pistol Taurus PT111 G2A 9mm Pistol Glock 42 .380 caliber Pistol Glock 42 .380 caliber Pistol	Rural King
TWENTY-NINE	May 17, 2021	Glock 42 .380 caliber Pistol Glock G48 9mm Pistol	Middletown Firearms
THIRTY	May 24, 2021	Anderson AM-15 300 .300 caliber Rifle	Middletown Firearms
THIRTY-ONE	May 26, 2021	Taurus PT111 G2A 9mm Pistol	Rural King
THIRTY-TWO	May 26, 2021	Glock 22Gen5 .40 caliber Pistol	Middletown Firearms
THIRTY-THREE	June 25, 2021	SCCY CPX-2 9mm Pistol Ruger EC9s 9mm Pistol	Rural King

17. All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(a)(1)(A).

TRUE BILL this 11<sup>th</sup> day of January 2023.

s/ Grand Jury Foreperson  
FOREPERSON

  
CHRISTOPHER R. KAVANAUGH  
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY